

English E/IIIA Homework Activities

Pre-Reading Activities

Activity 1 Key Vocabulary

Fill in the gaps using these key words from today's article.

Score: ____ /8

chewy euphemism scarce bewildered inundated ban sushi whale

1. If something is _____, it is rare or there is not much of it available.
2. _____ food is food which is tough and rubbery, and difficult to eat.
3. If you are _____, you are extremely confused.
4. A _____ is a very large sea animal that breathes air through a hole on the top of its head.
5. _____ is a Japanese dish with cold rice and fish, egg or vegetables.
6. A _____ is a word that people use when they want to talk about something unpleasant or embarrassing without mentioning the word itself.
7. _____ means the same as 'prohibition'.
8. _____ also means 'flooded'. If you are _____ with requests, for example, it means that you receive an extremely large number of them.

Activity 2 Scanning As quickly as possible, search today's article for the answers to these questions. You should take only 3 - 5 minutes, so don't read the article too carefully.

Score: ____ /5

1. How many people were questioned in the Japanese whaling survey? _____
2. How many were against a ban on whaling? _____
3. How many were in favor of a ban on whaling? _____
4. How many different kinds of hamburgers does Lucky Pierrot serve? _____
5. How much did the author pay for his whaleburger? _____

Activity 3 Skimming Quickly skim (read quickly and lightly) this week's article and mark any new words or expressions. In the chart below, write all the new words or expressions you marked. When you are finished skimming, look up these new words in your dictionaries and write the Japanese meaning. When you are finished with today's lesson, add these words and expressions to your Personal Dictionaries.

English	日本語	English	日本語	English	日本語	English	日本語

Activity 4 Listening Go to <http://mmuenge.blogspot.com/> and listen to Scott reading today's article. Try this several times and then try reading the article yourself.

Reading-in-Detail Activities

Activity 5 Reading in Detail After listening to the article several times, read today's article slowly and carefully. Try to understand everything in the article.

Activity 6 Discussion Questions Once you have read the article several times, think about the questions below. You and your group will discuss these questions in class, so prepare your own opinions and thoughts before you come to class. For the last question, think of one questions about the article on your own.

1. Have you ever eaten whale meat? Would you order whale if it was on the menu? Why/Why not?
2. Do you agree that Japanese fishermen have the right to hunt whales? Why/Why not?
3. Do you agree that all animals are appropriate food for humans? Why/Why not?
4. Are there any animals that you think should not be eaten? Why/Why not?
5. What do you think about cannibalism (eating human flesh)? If it's okay to eat whale meat, isn't also okay to eat human meat? Why/ Why not?
6. What is the most unusual food you have ever eaten?
7. What do you think about vegetarians? Isn't it better that we don't eat meat at all? Why/Why not?
8. (your question) _____ ?

Savoring the whale

By Eric Johnston

Foreign visitors to Japan can find a **variety** of sandwiches not available at most local fast food restaurants back home, but Lucky Pierrot, a restaurant chain based in the port of Hakodate, has decided to broaden its range of products. It is now selling whaleburgers. The restaurant serves 16 different varieties of hamburgers, 10 different kinds of curry and 12 different kinds of ice cream. Virtually everyone in the shop, just a stone's throw from the waterfront, is around high school or college age. It's nearly 3.30pm and I had been warned by the **friendly** owner the day before that, as only 20 whaleburgers a day were available, they could be sold out by the time I arrived.

I get to the counter and find that I'm in luck. After paying for the order and receiving a ticket (number 97), I sit down and wait for my number to come up. When the whaleburger arrives, it has been deep fried and placed on a bun with lettuce and mayonnaise. It was black and chewy. The cost was 380 yen (\$3.35). I look around to see if I am the only one eating a whale. It seems that I am.

Selling whaleburgers was not originally Lucky Pierrot's idea. Earlier this year the restaurant sent out a survey asking customers what new foods they would like to see on the menu. Responses showed the number-one choice was for "Ghengis Khan" burgers. In Japanese-English, this means thin strips of barbecued lamb, which is all the rage in the province of Hokkaido. The second choice was whale.

Given the long history of whaling in Japan, and the fact that whale meat is easily available in any port, such as Hakodate, it is perhaps not surprising that somebody would eventually add whaleburgers to their menu. Hakodate is one of the most beautiful cities in Japan and has a long association with the world's biggest mammal – it was the port where Japanese whaleships would deposit their catches. Now the city is a popular destination for Japanese tourists seeking to escape the sweltering summers elsewhere in the country. Shops across the harbor provide them with a vast array of seafood; huge frozen whole salmon, live crabs and a package clearly labeled "whale bacon". Beside it sits a small can of something called "red meat" in Japanese. When asked, a fishmonger says it is a euphemism for whale.

Traditionally in Japan, whale meat was enjoyed mainly by coastal communities. But it is also fondly remembered by many older Japanese in the cities. In the immediate postwar years in Tokyo, when food was scarce, other meat too **expensive**, and people were starving to death, whale meat kept many alive. In addition, whale oil was given to a generation of Japanese children as a vitamin **supplement**. It is this combination of postwar memories and a desire to preserve ancient traditions of coastal whaling that is driving much of the demand for whale meat. But while Lucky Pierrot may be unique in selling it in burger form, whale meat in Hakodate is quite common; the ninth of each month is designated "Whale Day", when shops and local restaurants offer discounts on their usual prices.

Later I meet with Inge Arnold, a young Australian woman, and her friend Takashige Arai at a local sushi restaurant. Arnold, who worked briefly in the Hakodate fish market, refuses to touch the whale sushi we ordered. But Arai and I eat it. Unlike the whaleburger, this sushi is red, tender and juicy, and has a taste. We agree, that is somewhere between tuna and mackerel.

While Hakodate merchants are well aware of the **international** controversy over the killing of whales, they are bewildered, and sometimes defensive, when confronted with the protests of anti-whaling campaigners. After news of Lucky Pierrot's whaleburgers spread, the restaurant's management were inundated with angry letters and emails. "We're not unique. Whale meat is widely available at many places in Japan," said Miku Oh, a **spokesman** for Lucky Pierrot.

Opinion polls show that the majority of the Japanese public are against a comprehensive whaling ban. A survey of 5,000 people, conducted by the country's Fisheries Agency in 2001, found that only 22.6% of those asked were in favor of a complete whaling ban, while 39% opposed such a move.

In truth much of the meat available in Hakodate, and Japan in general, is not from whales found in local waters but those killed for research purposes in waters as far away as Antarctica. The Japanese government points out that the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling requires that the by-products of whale research be processed and that whale meat on the market, whether it ends up as burgers, bacon or sushi, fulfils the treaty obligation, while the sale of the meat helps to partially offset research costs.

However, whale appears to be something of an acquired taste and, after growing up on a diet of fast food, not many young people seem to be acquiring it. "Right now, I'd say most of my friends far prefer other forms of seafood to whale. Especially here in Hakodate, where salmon and crab are so widely available," said Jun Matsuda, a college student from Tokyo who was visiting with his friends. "Whale meat is what my parents ate when they were young, and they said it wasn't very good. I've not seen the whaleburger, and I don't think I want one."

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